



Social Protection Reform Project  
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目

11<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 3-5 pm

ICC-NDRC

Baiyun Tower

## SPRP Coordination Meeting



### Participants:

EUD: Ms. Yi Xiaolin

NDRC: Ms. Tang Ling, Mr. Chang Hao, Ms. Wang Yue, Ms. Wang Yingsi

Ministry of Finance: Ms. Zhang Sicong

Ministry of Civil Affairs MoCA: Ms Zhang Lin

Project Office and C2: Mr. Michele Bruni, Ms. Valentina Pignotti, Ms. Ma Lan

C3: Ms. Marzena Breza

C1: Mr. Jean-Victor Gruat, Mr. Zhang Guoqing, Mr. Fang Lianquan, Ms. Xu Chenjia

1. Ms. Yi introduces the new mechanism of coordination meeting to better facilitate the implementation of the project, which was first proposed on the 2015 PAC meeting. This is actually the very first meeting as such, the suggestions in terms of the formality and the content are welcome. She suggests that three components present the summary and the feedbacks on the activities so far, and then exchange the ideas on the ways in which the coordination works among components, and finally address the issues and problems during the course of project implementation.

2. Ms Tang presents on the progress of Component 1 activities during the year 2016.

First, in terms of the research activities, C1 has had two workshops in January 2016. One is a concluding workshop for the 2015 research topics, and another one is a collaboration with CASS especially on the aftermath of financial crisis. Two site visits to Shanghai and Guangdong respectively have also been organised. According to the activity plan, 4 bilateral activities including 2 overseas visits and 2 international seminars are to take place in 2016. So far one of each category has been successfully implemented.

Component 1 is currently working on three important events including 2 overseas visits the preparation of which is making good progress, and high-level event HLE in September. In order to yield good result for the HLE, NDRC is also planning on several smaller-scale events including workshops and panel discussions as part of the preparation for the project HLE.

3. Mr. Gruat first provides further details on HLE. The background note on the event has been prepared and is to be shared with EU partners. Most European speakers have already been identified with confirmation for 2 still pending.

He specifies that the activity in Foshan Guangdong also involved a training seminar with European and Chinese speakers on the topic of migrant workers social security rights, the product of which was praised by participants. Activities of this type are quite cost-effective in view of their potential cascade effect through participation of provincial and local delegates, and more could be considered in the future. In the later half of the year, the component 1 is preparing a study visits to 2 EU countries for the provincial and municipal officials. The two receiving countries are actively engaged in the preparation. Preparation for the dialogue and study visit for central officials to Belgium and France to be organized by end of August is well under way.

In terms of the outputs of the activities, Component 1 has managed to produce bilingual versions of all documents which are made available online (for the time being 2016 documents are available from component website <http://www.sprp-cn.eu>, to be progressively uploaded on the project website <http://www.euchinasprp.eu>). Especially for the workshop in April and the recent training programme in Spain, the translation of all presentations was completed in advance, which significantly enhanced the effect and quality of the activities. Translation is a cooperative venture between NDRC and the project C1 team.

For the research topics in 2016, 4 studies are planned and the researchers are identified. The contracts for them have been prepared, and the preliminary meeting to discuss the research framework is to be held in the very near future.

Mr. Gruat also welcomes Mr. Bruni to be the new team leader who will be a valuable asset to the project.

4. Ms. Zhang Sicong, introduces on the 2016 activities of Component 2. With the participation of new team leader, the activities have been smooth in 2016. So far 4 reports from 2015 have been collected. A concluding workshop will take place on 12nd July, which will then produce two more complementary reports.

As for the research topics in 2016, C2 will have 2 sets of studies according to the plan. MoF suggests C2 prioritise the one of the research topic on assessment of household socio economic conditions (based on Italian ISEE model), as it has the closest bearings on the practical work of MoF. The proposal is well understood by the EU side of the project, and as a matter of fact the initiation of the first research has been launched already. The substantial work will be carried out very soon, and a panel discussion would be organised in November.

This topic is a definite example of potential for collaboration between components, since it is also of interest to C3.

The C2 team is confident that, while work on the first topic is a priority, resources will still be available to conduct activities related to other topics on the work programme.

In terms of the training programme to Italy, after rounds of discussions C2 is on the way to finalise the specificities of the event. A draft agenda is now available for comments and editing.

5. Ms Zhang Lin for C3 first starts with the activities of 2015. The research activities in 2015 have yielded 7 high-quality European reports, the content of which are closely related with the particular conditions of China thanks to collaboration between EU and the Chinese experts. These reports are already translated into Chinese, and are under proofreading.

The first C3 Workshop was organised in March, which gathered 3 EU experts to deliver their research results. 3 reports have come out of the event, and have been translated into Chinese. There will be 3 research topics in 2016. A preparation meeting was held on 16 May to discuss the framework of the researches. Field studies are undergoing according to plan. Ms Zhang Lin stressed the importance of two overseas activities undertaken within C3 this year. Namely April Minister Li Liguo visit to Poland and Spain (as an additional activity on the margin of the Project). Then the C3 June study visit to Romania, Czech Republic and Poland. Both activities were appreciated by MoCA which found it useful for deepening knowledge exchange and holding policy dialog meetings.

6. Ms. Breza draws attention to some of the successful achievements of C3. Exchanges and communications between EU and Chinese side constitute a highlight of C3's success. Each and every EU expert's missions consist of clear plan of bilateral and cross topics exchanges between EU and CN side. All the C3 EU missions enable MoCA officials during the events (panel discussions/workshops) a deep discussion as well following the discussion a bilateral meeting before submitting final EU reports to MoCA. This ensures the high quality of the component outputs as mentioned by MoCA.

Ms Breza mentioned that all reports are available bilingually, and can be easily accessed online when completing publishing process. C3 is about to finish (according to the work plan) 2015 HLF conference report – just waiting EN native edition. In addition a 2015 C3 Volume - a compilation of all 2015 researches will be produced shortly. Smooth communication between two partners allows the EU part to learn the urgent and practical needs and demands of MoCA. She also underlined the 2015 HLF was an excellent opportunity to broaden a EU perspective in the social assistance field and better understanding among MoCA staff. The exchange between EU side and MoCA after HLF has been improved. A follow up (beside the conference report) of the HLF is a research currently undertaken by Prof. Guan Xingping on the main achievements in social assistance in China which will be continued by sharing EU perspective in the coming months.

In the year of 2016, C3 also have three events to take place, including a the third panel discussion (September 2016) with a EU experts participation August/September and second workshop on research progress, as well a policy dialogue that is expected to take place in late November.

7. Ms Yi Xiaolin expresses concern regarding the High Level Event after 2016. 4 HLEs are planned for the project. Originally it was planned that each component in charge of 1 HLE and the fourth one to be shared. In actuality, the first HLE was carried out by C3, and the second HLE will be taken by C1. However, for the next HLE, MoF has no capacity to organise an event as such.

In this respect, several questions are worth asking. Firstly, do we want a HLE for 2017? Secondly, if yes what kind of format should it take? Thirdly, who should be responsible?

MoF explains that they cannot hold the event mainly due to the lack of personnel resource. Mr. Bruni indicates that there might be several possible strategies to address the issue of human resources. First is to have the Beijing office take main charge in the preparation. Second is to allocate the budget to other aspects in which MoF is interested instead of holding a HLE. Third is to make use of the fund to organise a collaborative event among 3 components to provide some useful products for the Chinese government.

Mme. Yi acknowledges that this is indeed a tricky question that would take time to resolve. She suggests that Mr. Bruni discusses with each component. Mr. Bruni points out that the issue is about how to put the budget in the fittest place.

8. Following up the issues raised on the observations from the 2<sup>nd</sup> PAC meeting

- regarding the Aide Memoire, EUD has received recently the finalised version and will have to review very soon.
- the coordination meeting suggested on PAC is materialised into today's gathering. It was agreed that an enlarged coordination meeting in the afternoon of 29 September after the HLE will be hold as all stakeholders would gather in Beijing.
- the importance of engaging more EU experts. A wide range of embassies have displayed interest in assisting the project to identify suitable experts for the activities. However, the tenders are usually provided very shortly before the event leaving too little time to actually seek potential candidates. Mme. Tang emphasizes the successful organisation of Spanish Training. More than 40 EU experts have been involved. Three members of the Chinese delegation also provided presentations on the national conditions, which significantly enhanced the relevance of the discussion.
- Project budget. An updated amendment to the budget plan has been submitted to EUD. However this has not been shared with three Chinese components. MOF and MOCA were event not aware of the budget amendment. Therefore, the updated version of budget amendment needs to be shared with three ministries and the resident experts before final approval by the EUD.
- Ms Tang clarifies after having received the first amendment to budget during PAC, NDRC already provided the feedback and comments. But they have not seen the how the new budget plan responds to such feedbacks. She also suggests that the project stick to the fundamental principle regarding budget that the money should be spent on activities rather than on the bureaucratic management and administration.

9. Other business

- Mr. Gruat brings the attention of the meeting on the situation of other stakeholders be they national or international. He indicates that in his view it is necessary to think about how to engage with and benefit to other related organisations and government agencies.
  
- Ms Yi acknowledges this as a fundamental principle of the project, and also points out that PAC meeting had not done enough to fulfill the set goal of providing policy advisory contribution, as it was focused on internal project management/planning approval. It is then necessary to think about the ways in which to improve the breadth of involvement of other stakeholders.
  
- Ms Tang responds by highlighting the various forms of sharing that might have already been taken by each component. She provides the example of collaborative activity with CASS through the organisation of an ad hoc meeting on Crisis and Social security. It might be tenable for the project office or the team leader to organise additional events responding to the needs of the stakeholders separate from PAC, which mainly functions as an administration steering committee.

Project Office

11 July 2016