

Social Protection Reform Project

Observations from the Third Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting

Beijing

24th February 2017

- **Aide Memoire 2017:** The proposed project activity plan 2017 reflects the priorities identified by the Chinese side and is in line with the objectives and scope of the project. The activities planned in the Aide Memoire 2017, except the two horizontal activities (*statistic bulletins* and *SPRP international workshop in Beijing*), are agreed in principle by the PAC subject to further modification based on the discussions during the meeting. The final version of Aide Memoire 2017 should be submitted to the EUD before the end of March 2017.
- **Suspended horizontal activities:** The PAC notes that the concepts of proposed activities in the Aide Memoire 2017 (*statistic bulletins* and *SPRP international workshop in Beijing*) were provided at the last minutes to PAC participants and are only in English version, it is therefore not appropriate to be reviewed at the PAC meeting. The project office will provide PAC members, in particular the Chinese beneficiaries, with Chinese version after the PAC meeting for their comments and suggestions. The project, if appropriate, will then elaborate the plan of activities to clarify the objectives and beneficiaries, identify necessary inputs, optimize the outputs and design implementing approaches. The activity plans need to be approved by the PAC Chairmen.
- **Involvement of EU expertise:** The mechanism established to involve experts from EU countries, both within and outside the Consortium, in participating in the project activities, is appreciated. The PAC underlines the importance of the EU dynamic experience structured to specific scenarios and settings of China, and requests to strengthen further the involvement of EU experts in the policy researches and reform proposals.
- **EU Experience:** The PAC emphasises that the EU best practices gained through overseas activities should provide China with the maximum value for future reference.
- **Gender issue:** The PAC appreciates the planned activity of C1 on *gender consideration in pension schemes*, which is in line with the EU strategy in gender development. The EUD looks forwards to the progress of activity and encourages further project initiatives in the gender issue related to social protection.

- **Interlinkage of similar activities:** The PAC observes a similar research area of the C2 and C3 in *coordination of social assistance resources*, and thus encourages necessary synergy between the two components by strengthening the interlinkages, sharing practices and promoting cooperation in the subject.
- **International travel of Chinese senior officials:** With reference to the planned overseas activities in 2017, the principle of the project Financial Agreement for management of overseas activities should be respected. The exception granted in the EUD letter in 2015 aimed to facilitate the limited international travels of the Chinese central officials to Europe under the scope of project activities and should not be taken as a basis for further negotiation.
- **Coordination meeting in Rome:** This activity is part of overseas activities plan in 2017 and should follow the above-mentioned management principle. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that the MOFCOM and EUD could not participate.
- **Quarterly dashboard:** The PAC underlines that the document should provide the reader with an easy to understand the project intermediary outputs and milestones based on the time framework. Rather than a complicated excel file, it would be more appreciated to have just few pages of periodic update.
- **Project outputs:** In order to share concrete project outputs with Chinese counterparts and relevant parties, a set of small, targeted publications on EU experiences, recommendations or applicability addressing the specific needs of and challenges in Chinese social protection reform are expected to be produced by each components in close consultation with Chinese counterparts.



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