

China in Europe Research Network (CHERN) - CA 18215

## Scientific research cooperation between China and (Northern) Europe under the Polar Silk Road

### Basics

**Host Organization:** Politics Unit, Tampere University (Finland)

**Host Organizations's representative:** Prof. Juha Vuori

**Representative's contact:** [juha.vuori@tuni.fi](mailto:juha.vuori@tuni.fi)

**The tentative length of the STSM:** 3 - 4 weeks

### Call's description and objectives

In 2017, China proposed to build "a blue economic passage linking Europe through the Arctic Ocean with China" (National Development and Reform Commission of PRC & State Oceanic Administration of PRC, 2017). This idea got further developed afterwards and eventually brought into China's massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a new expansion, namely, the Polar Silk Road (PSR). In China's first-ever Arctic policy, China formally announced jointly constructing PSR with other stakeholders, especially Arctic states (State Council Information Office of PRC, 2018). In this context, PSR is not merely limited to an economic development plan via Arctic shipping routes; in contrast, it has been expanded to general Arctic cooperation with China's involvement aiming to facilitate connections with Europe through the High North. Scientific research cooperation is the first step and has been a crucial pillar of China's participation in Arctic affairs, which has been integrated into China's PSR since the plan got proposed.

Scientific research cooperation between China and its Arctic partners has existed for a long time. Arctic states generally welcome China's involvement in Arctic scientific research, and corresponding cooperation has been noticeably developed, especially the cooperation with European Arctic states. For example, since 2013, China-Iceland Joint Arctic Science Observatory (CIAO), China-Nordic Arctic Research Center (CNARC), and China-Finland Joint Research Center for Arctic Space Observation and Data Sharing Services have been established and developed. Meanwhile, China's increasing interests and involvement in Europe in general and in the European Arctic region (especially in the context of PSR) has been highly visible in European media and academia with growing doubts about China's real motives, such as the potential dual use of China's Arctic facilities (Kopra, 2020), although pro-China narratives also

exist in Europe. Such a growing scepticism inevitably challenges China's scientific research cooperation with its European partners, although the scepticism is mainly triggered by China's increasing investment, particularly the one in critical infrastructures.

In this context, has the attitude in European Arctic states towards scientific research cooperation with China considerably changed? If so, how has it changed? Has China also changed its attitude towards cooperating with the Northern European partners accordingly? Understanding these questions is significant for both European Arctic states and China to better navigate their future research cooperation, but it is largely under-researched in the existing research.

Therefore, this STSM aims to develop collaborative efforts between the host and the selected STSM fellow to analyze potential domestic attitudinal changes in European Arctic states and China towards their joint scientific research cooperation in the Arctic. The potential changes will be examined from the perspectives of *the general public* and *elites (scientists and officials)*, respectively. To what extent the attitudinal changes (if they exist) are relevant to the development of China's PSR will also be explored. Compared to other Nordic states, China cooperates with Finland and Iceland more closely in the Arctic. Thus, this STSM will focus on China's scientific research cooperation with either Finland or Iceland, depending on the STSM fellow's language skills.

**Objectives.** The collaborative project will include the following tasks:

- Mapping China-Northern Europe scientific research cooperation in the Arctic since China became a permanent observer in the Arctic Council in 2013;
- Developing a methodological framework for this project;
- Identifying possible data sources in either Finland or Iceland;
- Conducting discourse analysis of potential changes in either Finnish or Icelandic public attitudes towards scientific research cooperation with China;
- Developing a joint research project proposal on this topic.

## Call's specific requirements

In addition to COST requirements (see **Practical details** below), the applicant should meet the following criteria:

- Basic knowledge of scientific research cooperation between Europe and China
- Familiarity with content analysis and discourse analysis
- Good language capability in English and either Finnish or Icelandic

## Results

In addition to COST requirements (scientific report) the STSM will results in:

- A short report on scientific research cooperation between China and Northern European states in the Arctic

- A working paper on the attitude analysis. The host and the STSM fellow will revise the working paper later to an article for academic journal
- Blog post for CHERN website

## Practical details

All applicants must carefully read the [STSM basic facts](#) on CHERN's website before applying.

Potential pandemic restrictions would mean that initial meetings and activities would be done remotely. The exact dates and timing of the mission shall be determined jointly by the Host and the selected applicant.

## Deadlines

Deadline for applications to be submitted: **March 25 2022**

Notification of application outcome: **April 5 2022**

Period of STSM: Spring to Summer 2022 (exact dates to be determined together with the host)

Submitting the reports: **30 days** after completing the STSM (and no later than October 15<sup>th</sup>)

Accepting/ rejecting the reports: **within 2 weeks** after submission of the report

Execution of the payment of the grant: **within 4 weeks** after submission of the report

## More information

For more information please contact:

STSM Coordinator Martina Bofulin ([martina.bofulin@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:martina.bofulin@zrc-sazu.si))